

# CURTAILED CURTAILMENTS

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A neglected subject in Word Ways is that of Curtailments. Since someone should write a definitive article on words which can have their last letters removed and still remain words, I offer some notes on the subject to stimulate, perhaps, a reader to become an author.

1. It is clearly trivial to exhibit a noun or verb with an inflectional ultimate S and then to remove it, so no more need be said about that aspect of Curtailments.
2. It is almost as shallow to go to verbs ending in -E having past participles ending in -ED. The champion longest appears to be the Webster's Second Edition word THYROPARATHYROIDECTIONIZE(D). Two other long examples are COUNTERREVOLUTIONIZE(D) and DISDENOMINATIONALIZE(D).
3. The longest Curtailments other than the inflectional forms apparently belong to the category of words ending in -GRAPHY which can yield words ending in -GRAPH. Two such longest words are ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPH(Y) in Webster's Third and STEREOPHOTOMICROGRAPH(Y) in both the Second and the Third.
4. These are followed in length by the Webster's Third Edition word ELECTROHYSTEROGRAPH(Y) and the Second Edition word METAPHENYLENEDIAMINE(E). The latter specimen, consisting of alternate spellings of the same word, is rather uninteresting.
5. Surely there must be many fascinating Curtailments of the forms given below, in which the two words are basically unrelated in meanings, and yet show a variety of pronunciations and syllabifications.

BADGE(R)	RABBI(T)	HEROIN(E)	FONTINA(L)
DIVER(T)	RATIO(N)	POSSES(S)	FOOTLES(S)
HONES(T)	SATAN(G)	POTHER(B)	GAMINES(S)
LATHE(R)	SHREW(D)	REVERS(E)	HYDRANT(H)
PRIES(T)	SOUGH(T)	SHRIVE(L)	BULLETIN(G)
QUART(Z)	SQUAW(K)	SLEIGH(T)	WAREHOUS(E)

6. The category of Curtailment Dismemberments was treated in passing in the May 1971 Word Ways where Darryl Francis presented the words CAROLINES and CAROLINER (CAROLINAS or CAROL-

INGS would have served as well but were inappropriate for the study) having the property that each final letter may be removed in turn to leave a new word until only a single letter (word) remains. All words formed are in Webster's Second. In a private communication, Darryl has indicated that an obscure reference gives (by inference) CAROLINEAS and the genus CAROLINEA to extend the chain to ten letters, although forming the plural of a genus is often frowned upon. To atone for this, he offered in the July 1971 issue of The Enigma, the monthly publication of The National Puzzlers' League the ten-letter Curtailment Dismemberment given at the left below. In Language on Vacation (Scribner's, 1965), Dmitri Borgmann exhibited one of equal length, given at the right:

ANGELICALS  
ANGELICAL  
ANGELICA  
ANGELIC  
ANGELI (1)  
ANGEL  
ANGE (2)  
ANG (3)  
AN  
A

ALBERTINES  
ALBERTINE  
ALBERTIN  
ALBERTI  
ALBERT  
ALBER (4)  
ALBE  
ALB  
AL  
A

(1) is a town in Sweden (Times Index-Gazetteer), (2) is a synonym of "anger" (Oxford English Dictionary), (3) is the hairy part of an ear of barley (English Dialect Dictionary), and (4) is a German poet (Funk & Wagnalls). All other words can be found in Webster's Second Edition (including the Biographical section).

7. I mentioned to Darryl Francis that FOLDEROL yields words by removing two letters at a time, with the intermediate combinations of a single letter being removed not being Websterian words (FO means "Buddha" in Webster's Second). He replied with SHOULDERER or SHOULDERED; SHOU is a Chinese character meaning "longevity" and SH means "shut up" (which I now will).

There are the outlines and the challenge, word lovers. Who will furnish the detailed dissertation?